

## EFFICIENT & SWIFT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2002 FARM BILL



Upon the one-year anniversary of President Bush's signing of the *Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002*, Secretary Veneman announced that USDA employees have done an outstanding job of implementing the legislation.

In addition to all the analyses conducted, regulations written, training conducted, software and websites developed and the sign-up of participants and disbursements of program benefits, USDA employees have:

- ☑ Implemented all key commodity program provisions quickly and efficiently
- ☑ Provided more than \$8 billion in program payments for agricultural producers
- ☑ Released more than \$1.8 billion for conservation assistance on working lands, including funding for Farm Bill and appropriated programs
- ☑ Revised the Conservation Reserve Program and initiated a new sign up
- ☑ Provided an additional \$10 million for the Market Access Program and other additional funds for market-development activities
- ☑ Implemented the Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops Program announcing \$2 million in funding
- ☑ Launched the new McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program
- ☑ Implemented a successful and popular pilot program to increase fruit and vegetable consumption in schools
- ☑ Provided access to Food Stamp Program benefits for newly qualified legal immigrants
- ☑ Awarded hundreds of millions of dollars in Rural Development assistance, including value-added grants, and water and waste disposal funds
- ☑ Published final regulations and sought applications for an anticipated \$1.4 billion in rural broadband loans and loan guarantees
- ☑ Implemented the Senior Scientific Research Service, which allows USDA to attract and retain the highest-caliber scientists
- ☑ Implemented the Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvement Program and announced the availability of \$23 million in grants
- ☑ Implemented the Biomass Research and Development Program and announced availability of \$21 million in grants
- ☑ Made key revisions to the Bioenergy Program, which provides up to \$115.5 million in funding for Fiscal Year 2003 and up to \$150 million annually over the next three fiscal years
- ☑ Held 11 sessions across the country and in Puerto Rico to reach out to all USDA customers
- ☑ Swore in Vernon Parker as the first USDA Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

### SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE FIRST YEAR OF FARM BILL IMPLEMENTATION

**Title I – Commodity Programs:** All the key commodity program provisions have been implemented efficiently and in a timely manner. These programs include: direct and countercyclical payments, marketing assistance loans, crop base and yield elections, Milk Income Loss Contract, dairy price support, peanut quota buyout, apple market loss assistance.

**Title II -- Conservation Programs:** On Earth Day, USDA released more than \$1.8 billion for conservation assistance on working lands, including funding for Farm Bill and appropriated programs. Also, Secretary Veneman announced that the general sign-up for the Conservation Reserve Program was announced to begin on May 5 and go through May 30. The CRP final rule has been issued.

**Title III -- Trade:** USDA announced that the additional \$10 million provided for the Market Access Program for FY 2002 had been allocated to 65 U.S. trade organizations. Allocated the additional \$7 million for the Foreign Market Development Program for FY 2002 to 25 cooperator organizations. Published the proposed rule for the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program.

**Title IV – Nutrition Programs:** Funded Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs for seniors and for WIC recipients at over \$30 million in FY 2003. Food stamp rule changes were implemented timely, which simplified the program and which allowed many legal aliens to be eligible on the same basis that citizens are eligible. Provided \$6 million to schools in a pilot to increase fruit and vegetable consumption.

**Title V – Credit:** Published final rule making FSA employees eligible for direct loans.

**Title VI – Rural Development:** USDA announced the awarding of \$33 million in FY 2002 funding for grants to open new markets for value-added agricultural products, including renewable energy products. Announced the awarding of \$703 million in loan and grant assistance for 377 water and waste disposal projects in 47 States and Puerto Rico. Published final regulations and a Notice of Application Deadline for implementing the broadband loan program; it is anticipated that about \$1.4 billion in direct loans and loan guarantees could be awarded in response to this action.

**Title VII – Research:** USDA established the Senior Scientific Research Service. Awarded \$8 million in grants to the National 4-H Council, the National FFA Organization and the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. to establish pilot projects to expand youth development programs in rural areas and small towns throughout America.

**Title VIII – Forestry:** The Forest Land Enhancement interim rule was cleared and sent to OMB for further action.

**Title IX – Energy:** USDA published a final rule on the Bioenergy Program and held stakeholders' forums for biobased products and for renewable energy systems and energy efficiency. USDA signed a cooperative agreement to test biobased products for preferred procurement with Iowa State University. Published a Notice of Funding Availability for \$23 million in Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements grants for FY 2003. Published a request for proposals for \$21 million in grants under the Biomass Research and Development Initiative.

**Title X – Miscellaneous:**

- Crop Insurance: FCIC Board approved expansion of Adjusted Gross Revenue insurance for the 2003 and subsequent crop years into 8 counties in California and 8 additional counties in Pennsylvania.
- Disaster Assistance: Provided about \$94 million to eligible apple growers for their 2000 apple crop production that will help offset economic losses.
- Animal Welfare: USDA submitted a report to congress that tracks the number of violations of the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act of 1958.
- Animal Health Protection Act: USDA published a proposed rule regarding blood and tissue collection.
- Specialty Crops: Announced the availability of \$5 million for the National Organic Cost-Share Program.
- Administration: Nominated, confirmed and swore in Vernon Parker as the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights. USDA also held 11 informational meetings across the country and in Puerto Rico to ensure customers were fully aware of services and to highlight changes and new provisions of the 2002 Farm Bill.
- General Provisions: USDA has started holding 12 listening sessions around the country that are related to the Country of Origin Labeling provision.

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